

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

COLLEGE STATION TEXAS 77843

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ENGINEERING

March 30, 1971

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
School of Medicine
Stanford University
Stanford, California 94305

Dear Professor Lederberg:

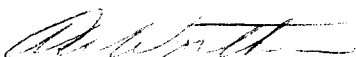
I read your article "Biological Warfare: A Global Threat" in the March-April issue of the American Scientist with interest and gratification. You have very eloquently pointed out the need to forestall the further development, proliferation, and possible eventual recourse to what surely is one of the most ghastly methods of warfare imaginable. In the absence of international commitments to this end however, I believe it is of utmost importance that proper and full understanding of defending against such war be known and adopted.

Recently we conducted a study on the possible transmission of communicable agents by mail. A brief result statement of this work is enclosed for your consideration. We have demonstrated that the mail can serve as an effective transport medium for chemical and biological agents.

These research results are based on data obtained by a random sampling of mail delivered to the Industrial Engineering Department offices over a period of four months. It can be assumed that such mail is not intended to be a carrier or a disseminator of communicable agents. However, it is obvious that when the mail is intentionally adapted to such usage, the results could be catastrophic. The accessibility of postal facilities to anyone in the international community including enemies and psychopaths, establishes the mail as an economic, efficient, and convenient method for the dispersal of pathogenic agents.

To my knowledge, there exist no countermeasure systems to control and defense against such exigencies. Your comments regarding this work and possible extensions thereof would be most appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



A. W. Wortham, Head
Industrial Engineering

AWW:ct